



The Parish of Abbots Langley

St Lawrence Church, Abbots Langley  
with the Church of the Ascension, Bedmond

# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

A parish policy on child protection

Adopted by the Parochial Church Council on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2012  
updated 24th November 2016

**PARISH OF ABBOTS LANGLEY**  
**SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**INTRODUCTION**

Week by week, in our churches much valued work with children and young people is carried out by people, mostly on a voluntary basis. The contribution they make in nurturing and guiding our children in the Christian way of life can never be over-estimated.

Sadly it is a fact that adults will attempt to infiltrate any organisation to abuse children or young people. The church is probably no more vulnerable than other organisations, but is unique in its ministry to both those who have been abused and those who have abused. We therefore need to create and maintain a culture of informed vigilance to safeguard and promote the welfare of our children. This can be achieved by a number of means, the most relevant to this parish being:

SAFE RECRUITMENT

AND

RESPONDING appropriately and proportionately to concerns about a child or young person, or concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a child, or children or young person.

The following is intended to explain the role of our designated PCC Safeguarding Co-ordinator and those with a responsibility to select both volunteers and employed people who will have regular contact with, and a duty of care for children within the church community.

It will also be circulated to all those who serve the parish and church community and assist with our children's and youth work, and give their time and expertise as leaders and helpers in the Creche, Tiny Tots, Seekers, Youth Choir, Messy Church, Dynamite and the Abbots Langley Youth Project. In addition the main elements will apply to those who have contact with vulnerable adults as part of the welcome and ministry that we offer in our churches.

Further advice or guidance will always be available from the Diocesan Child Protection Advisor (see final page for relevant contact details).

*Adopted by PCC*  
3<sup>rd</sup> October 2012  
updated 4<sup>th</sup> November 2015  
updated 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

The Church of England, in all aspects of its life, is committed to and will champion the protection of children and young people both in society as a whole and in its own community. It fully accepts, endorses and will implement the principles enshrined in The Children Act 1989 that the welfare of the child is paramount. The Church of England will foster and encourage best practice within its community by setting standards for working with children and young people and by supporting parents in the care of their children. It will work with statutory bodies, voluntary agencies and other faith communities to promote the safety and well being of children and young people. It is committed to acting promptly whenever a concern is raised about a child or young person or about the behaviour of an adult, and will work with the appropriate statutory body when an investigation into child abuse is necessary.

### **ST ALBANS DIOCESE**

The Diocese of St Albans has adopted and fully supports this Church of England policy statement. This guidance reflects these principles.

### **ROLE OF SAFEGUARDING CO-ORDINATOR**

The role of the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator is

- To take responsibility to ensure the PCC complies with the safe recruitment process as outlined below.
- To collate and clarify the precise details of any allegation or suspicion, and pass this information to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor. On rare occasions it may be necessary to inform the local Children, School and Families department or the Police immediately. The relevant contact numbers can be found at the back of this document. In this event the Diocesan Child Protection Officer must be informed as soon as is practicable. Under such circumstances, due consideration should be given to seeking medical attention as a priority.

It is important to remember that no one within the Church should become involved in investigating, which is a clearly defined legal obligation placed on the local authority and Police. Any concerns about a child or the conduct of an adult towards a child, or children should be referred to the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator, who should then consult with the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.

## **SAFE RECRUITMENT**

### **WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF A CHILD?**

The Children Act 1989 defines a child as someone who has not yet attained their 18th birthday. The term 'child' therefore includes young people throughout.

### **WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO WHEN RECRUITING?**

As described above, one of the ways that children and young people are protected from harm is to take care over the way adults are appointed when they are likely to have contact with children. All such applicants should be subject to the following:

- Prospective Employees/Volunteers should be regarded as job applicants and have a defined role
- Complete an application form
- Have an interview
- Name two referees, one of which should be their current employer, or from a previous church. It is important that in certain circumstances the authenticity of the person purporting to be a referee is checked. This need not be a lengthy process, often a single telephone call will suffice.
- Be given appropriate training guidance, and supervision.

## **DBS CLEARANCE**

If the decision is made to appoint, the appointee should complete a disclosure at Enhanced Level.

### **WHO SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO DBS CHECK?**

All people in paid employment or working as a volunteer, who come into regular and direct contact with children during their work or activities, or have a duty of care or responsibility for children. Examples of this will include activities in which both children and adults participate. There are some exceptions to this. In the case of bell ringers, it is only necessary for the Tower Captain to be DBS cleared. In the case of choirs, it is not necessary for all members to be DBS cleared but the Director of Music, who has a duty of care, should be subject to this procedure. In both these circumstances a second person within the Tower or choir should be DBS cleared – see next paragraph.

Good practice, for everyone's benefit, dictates that there should be a reasonable ratio of the number of adults, in proportion to the number of children (outlined in The Children Act 1989). In any case, where it is reasonably practicable, there should be at least two adults present supervising children. These adults should be DBS cleared at enhanced level.

“Activities” also includes residential activities.

There will be instances where parents remain present throughout the activity and in these circumstances also the supervisors should be DBS cleared.

Where there is a doubt or ambiguity, please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor for advice.

## **VETTING AND BARRING.**

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, often referred to as “Vetting and Barring” created The Independent Safeguarding Authority. The legislation was due to be implemented in full in October 2010. However during June 2010 the Home Secretary announced that the scheme was now on hold, pending ‘remodelling’. We await news about what the new scheme and its effects will be.

Part of the legislation remains ‘live’, which is that the diocese has a duty, under the legislation, to report to the ISA anyone who is suspended, or dismissed from post, as a result of a child protection or vulnerable adults’ issue. This duty is regardless of whether or not the person has been charged by the police with an offence, prosecuted, convicted, or a finding of not guilty following criminal proceedings. The legislation also requires the diocese to report to the ISA anyone known to have convictions for offences against children young persons or vulnerable adults.

The Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser will deal with this process, but needs to be informed immediately should any person come within one of the categories described above.

## **CONFIDENTIAL DECLARATION FORMS – WHERE TO OBTAIN ONE AND WHY THEY ARE USED**

The first step in the DBS clearance process is to complete a Confidential Declaration form. Copies of this form can be obtained from the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator, the Diocesan web site, or the publication, “Protecting All God’s Children”. The purpose of the Confidential Declaration is to give the applicant an early opportunity to disclose any convictions or cautions and to discuss, in confidence, anything that may cause embarrassment. It also encourages honesty and integrity from the outset.

## **HOW TO APPLY FOR DBS CLEARANCE**

Processing DBS clearance application forms in respect of volunteers is now carried out on our behalf by Churches Child Protection Advisory Services (CCPAS). The Parish Safeguarding coordinator has been appointed as our ‘lead recruiter’, and is registered with CCPAS. The Vicar is also registered as a ‘recruiter’.

The applicant will be provided with log in details to access the system online. Guidance will be given by the lead recruiter. Once the online application has been completed the necessary identification documents should be given to the lead recruiter for processing. It is the responsibility of each applicant to produce to the recruiter their disclosure, once it is received, as the recruiter no longer receives a copy of the disclosure directly.

No person should take up the post until suitable references and DBS results have been received. Any enquiries concerning DBS issues should be taken up with the Parish Safeguarding Coordinator, or forwarded to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser or CCPAS.

In accordance with a recent directive from the House of Bishops, all DBS checks will be renewed every 5 years.

## **WHAT IF THE APPLICANT HAS A CONVICTION?**

A caution or conviction does not necessarily bar a person from working with children; this will depend on all of the circumstances. A system is in place within the Diocese where positive disclosures are considered by a panel, who will advise on the suitability of the person to the post for which they are applying. Further details can be obtained from the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser.

## **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS**

### **THE FOUR CATEGORIES OF ABUSE**

There are four main recognised categories of abuse. They are Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse, and Neglect.

These are outlined below, with additional advice.

#### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Physical abuse can range from excessive smacking to inflicting injuries so serious that the result can be permanent disability or death.

Physical abuse involves hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, punching, kicking, or otherwise causing physical injury to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child. This was formerly referred to as Munchausen's Syndrome.

The symptoms of physical abuse manifest themselves as bruising on areas of the body where it would be difficult to have occurred accidentally, fractured limbs etc. Children can also be withdrawn, fearful, and aggressive.

It is important to note that this is not an exhaustive or definitive list, neither should one single symptom be seen as indicative of abuse; all known facts need to be considered.

#### **SEXUAL ABUSE**

This category involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery, or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts.

They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

It is almost impossible to recognise symptoms of sexual abuse which will result in abnormal medical conditions. It requires highly experienced medical professionals to diagnose abuse, and recent controversy within the medical profession simply emphasises the difficulties in this highly sensitive area.

Notwithstanding medical symptoms, the child may present as being withdrawn, fearful of adults, show inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age, extreme exposure or preoccupation with genitalia, unexplained sums of money, or gifts.

#### **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the need of another person.

It may involve serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation, or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment, though it may occur alone.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

It is worthy of note that the issue of domestic abuse, and the negative effects for children living in an abusive household, is now recognised as being emotionally abusive.

It is very difficult to recognise physical signs of emotional abuse but it may manifest itself by the child lacking in self confidence, as a result of constant criticism, poor interaction between parent and child, developmental delay, communication difficulties, self harming etc.

## **NEGLECT**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home, or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Neglect is usually obvious. The child will be inappropriately dressed for the weather conditions, dirty, unkempt, poor personal hygiene, low weight and height for age, poor skin, and hair condition, constant hunger, voracious appetite, hiding food etc.

To emphasise again what has been previously stated, the indicators of abuse outlined above must not be taken in isolation. The list is not definitive, neither is it exhaustive.

## **WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT ABUSE**

The reality is that incidents of abuse of a child by an adult within a church setting is, thankfully rare, but you may have concerns for a child or family, within the wider community.

Any concerns around a child, or the conduct of an adult towards a child, should be reported to either the designated Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator, the incumbent, or the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor. **Please do not allow this reporting procedure to be delayed.** On very exceptional and rare occasions, the need for medical attention or immediate Police attendance may be needed

## **INVESTIGATION OF SUSPECTED ABUSE**

It is essential to remember that it is not the responsibility of anyone within the Church to investigate. Child Protection investigations can be sensitive, complex, and require a great deal of expertise and experience.

Normally the requirement from the Church community is that any concerns are reported to the Parish Safeguarding Co-ordinator and to the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor. Certain circumstances may

dictate that the local authority social care or the Police should be contacted first. In this instance the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor should be informed at the first opportunity.

### **WHY DO PEOPLE FEEL RELUCTANT TO REPORT ABUSE?**

It is appreciated that for a lay person to report what they suspect to be abuse of a child or concern around an adult's conduct towards a child, or children can be a daunting experience. Concerns such as "What if I am wrong," the social standing of the person concerned within the community, the impact on the family concerned, the impact on the church community, are questions raised by those considering referring abuse.

To balance some of these concerns it should be remembered that children very rarely lie about abuse.

Professionals from all agencies involved in safeguarding children will have undergone specialist training. They will be well experienced and will act with sensitivity and discretion. The aim of professionals is not to remove children from the family unit but to work with the family. Removal of a child happens in rare and exceptional circumstances.

If reporting suspicions of abuse is difficult for an adult, then please consider the trauma a child faces in such circumstances. An abuser will have conditioned and groomed the child, using threats and fear to prevent disclosure. The child will have had to overcome all of these inhibitors, and built up sufficient trust and faith in an adult to disclose to them.

### **QUESTIONING**

#### **HOW TO QUESTION EFFECTIVELY**

Some questioning may be necessary to establish basic facts. Use only open questions. It is important to emphasise that any questioning must be kept to an absolute minimum.

#### **SOME DO'S AND DON'TS**

- DO listen without interruption to what the child is saying.
- DO reassure the child that they are not to blame and they are doing the right thing by telling.
- DO stay calm.
- DO be honest and tell the child what will happen next.
  
- DON'T make promises to the child. As an example do not tell them that you will keep what has been said, secret.
- DON'T interrogate the child, as stated above it is for others to investigate.
- DON'T criticise the alleged perpetrator
- DON'T ask leading questions, for example, "Was it your dad that caused that bruise?"

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING WRITTEN RECORDS**

A written record of disclosure or concerns you may have relating to a child, or adult should be made, based on what you have seen or heard. Use the exact words or term used by the child.

In the event of a disclosure from a child, a record of the conversation should be made as soon as is practicable. These should be kept safe. It may be that the police will need to have these.

## **SAFEGUARDING RESOURCES** (as currently listed on the Church of England website)

- A copy of all the published resources is kept in the Church Office and is available to borrow
- Alternatively, copies may be downloaded via:  
<http://www.churchofengland.org/clergy-office-holders/child-protection-safeguarding.aspx>

### **Children and Young People Safeguarding**

1995 House of Bishops produced first child protection policy document (in response to the Home Office's 1993 document *Safe from Harm*). This was revised in 1999 and 2004.

2010 - Latest policy ***Protecting All God's Children*** (4<sup>th</sup> ed. Church House Publishing £6.99)

*The policy is in place to protect not only children and young people, but also those adults who are committed to working with and for them.*

***Responding Well to those who have been sexually abused*** (CHP £7.99)

July 2011 - House of Bishops approved policy and guidance for dioceses and parishes

**Adult Safeguarding *Promoting a Safe Church*** (CHP £5.99)

The Church of England is committed to encouraging an environment where all people and especially those who may be vulnerable for any reason are able to worship and pursue their faith journey with encouragement and in safety.

### **Safer recruitment**

Best practice is highlighted in ***Safeguarding Guidelines*** (2010 – available only as download) as an interim policy until current uncertainties around the Independent Safeguarding Authority are clarified by the Government.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2254766/safeguarding%20practice%20guidance-%20safer%20recruitment.pdf>

<https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2254792/safeguarding%20joint%20practice%20guidance%20-%20safeguarding%20records.pdf>

### **Domestic Abuse**

In 2006, the Archbishops Council published ***Responding to Domestic Abuse: Guidelines for those with pastoral responsibility*** (CHP £5.99)

### **Protection of Freedoms Act 2012**

Protection of Freedoms Act Guidance (Sept 12)

Info Sheet 4 - [Portability](#)

Info Sheet 3 - [DBS Eligibility](#)

Info Sheet 2 - [Regulated Activity](#)

Info Sheet 1 - [Vulnerable Adults Definition](#)

[http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/info\\_sheet\\_no\\_1\\_vulnerable\\_adults\\_definition\\_may\\_2012.pdf](http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/info_sheet_no_1_vulnerable_adults_definition_may_2012.pdf)

### **USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS**

The following are contact details to make a referral during office hours Mon-Fri.

Please contact the Diocese Safeguarding Adviser in the first instance.

Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser – Mr Jeremy Hirst (*name & telephone numbers updated Nov 2016*)

Tel: 01727 818107

Mobile: 07867 350886

Email: [childprotection@stalbans.anglican.org](mailto:childprotection@stalbans.anglican.org)

Hertfordshire Children Schools & Families team

During & outside office hours: 0300 1234043

Police Contact

Hertfordshire Police: 0845 3300 222

### **PARISH CONTACT NUMBERS**

Parish Safeguarding Coordinator – Anne Donald

Tel: 01923 270288

Email: [annedonald3@gmail.com](mailto:annedonald3@gmail.com)

Vicar – The Revd Dr Peter Waddell (*name and telephone number updated Sep 2016*)

Tel: 01923 263013

Email: [vicar@abbotslangley.org.uk](mailto:vicar@abbotslangley.org.uk)

Churchwarden and Seekers Leader – Jane McHugh

Tel: 01923 264280

Email: [janemchugh123@btinternet.com](mailto:janemchugh123@btinternet.com)

Parish Administrator – Pam Rastall

Church Office tel: 01923 261795

Email: [adminstlawrence@abbotslangley.org.uk](mailto:adminstlawrence@abbotslangley.org.uk)